

OPERATION AND SERVICES

1.0 General Program Operations and Services Information

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Pre-K program is to provide full day (6.5 hours of instructional services), five days per week, 36 weeks (180 days) per year of appropriate educational/instructional services to eligible four-year-old children.

1.2 Dates of Service

The 2009-2010 school year Pre-K program will operate within the dates stated in the grant agreement.

1.3 Days of Service

Pre-K providers are required to prepare and provide a school year calendar that accounts for 190 days which includes 180 days of service to families and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/duties (pre- and post-planning, staff development, in-service days) for staff. Pre-K staff cannot be used to provide services unrelated to Pre-K during the 190-day school year during the eight hour work day.

2.0 Child/Family Eligibility

2.1 Age Requirement

Children must be four years of age on September 1, 2009, based on acceptable documentation, such as birth certificates, passports, official medical documents, legal documents, or official documents from other countries. Only children whose birthdates are from September 2, 2004, through September 1, 2005, are eligible for participation in the 2009-2010 school year. **Proof of age eligibility must be on file the day the child begins the Pre-K program.** Payments will be reduced for children without age documentation on file the first day of school.

Children who are five years of age on September 1, 2009, and have not attended Georgia's Pre-K Program as four year olds, may enroll in the Pre-K program. Parents and teachers are encouraged to consider the child's date of birth, physical maturity, emotional maturity, and prior experiences when making the decision to enroll the child in the Pre-K program at age four or age five. Parents should check with the Pre-K program for specific enrollment policies concerning five year olds. Programs choosing not to accept children who are five years of age on September 1, 2009, should have a written policy supporting their decision.

Children who are six years of age on September 1, 2009, and are age-eligible for first grade are not eligible for enrollment in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

If a child enrolls as a four year old, and it is determined within the child's first 30 days of enrollment that the child is not benefiting, the family may withdraw the child, and the child will be eligible to

enroll in Pre-K the following year. Parents of five-year-old children will be asked to sign a *Parent Acknowledgement Form* (see Appendix A) indicating that the child did not previously attend Georgia's Pre-K Program for longer than 30 days.

Children who attend Pre-K will transition to kindergarten the following year. Bright from the Start will review requests for children to repeat Pre-K on a case-by-case basis. All such requests should be submitted in writing to the Pre-K Inclusion Coordinator and should include the reason(s) the student would be better served in Pre-K than in kindergarten; copies of the completed assessment tool with supporting documentation; doctor's recommendations; interventions during the Pre-K program year; special education referrals; evaluations conducted; etc.

All requests to repeat Pre-K including supporting documentation must be received by Bright from the Start by May 1, 2010.

Mail requests to:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

ATTN: Request to Repeat Pre-K

10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200

Atlanta, GA 30303

2.2 Residency Requirement

The child must be a Georgia resident. For purposes of this program, Georgia resident is defined as a child who resides in the state of Georgia. Proof of residency should be part of a child's on-site file prior to or on the first day of Pre-K. Examples of proof of residency include: current lease, current vehicle registration form, letter from shelter, letter from employer if employer provides housing, and any utility bill listing the residence as the service address. A cell phone bill or a driver's license is not an acceptable proof of residency.

2.3 Parent Requirement

A parent must agree to send the child to the Pre-K program for 6.5 hours of instructional time, five days per week, 180 days per year. A child who is chronically tardy or absent can be disenrolled from the program. A child who is not enrolled in the extended day program and is not picked up at the end of the Pre-K day on a regular basis can be disenrolled. (See Section 3.9)

2.4 Category One Definition

Category One child eligibility is defined as the child's and/ or family's participation in one of the following: Food Stamps, SSI, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program, or Peach Care for Kids. Documentation of the child's participation must be verified and kept on file for review. Children who participate in the free and reduced meal program through the center/school that they attend may also be used as Category 1 documentation if income eligibility is verified on each child and kept on file for review.

2.5 Category Two Definition

Category Two children are those who do not meet the requirements for Category One eligibility.

3.0 Enrollment

3.1 Open Enrollment

Enrollment for the program must be open and nondiscriminatory. Providers must develop written policies to meet the needs of children and families in the community. The written enrollment policies should be kept on-site and available to parents. The definition and implementation of such policies are determined by individual providers. **Providers cannot require immunization or a Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examinations (EED) as a condition of enrollment. Providers cannot require upfront payment of meal fees or participation in summer programs as a condition of enrollment.**

A child cannot be denied participation in the program pending verification of his/her status related to Category One or extended day services. Children cannot be denied participation on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs.

3.2 Local School Attendance Zones

A child who resides within the local school system, but not within the attendance zone of the specific school providing the Pre-K program, may not be denied service but may be placed on a waiting list until all children who do reside within the attendance zone of the specific school are enrolled. A child who resides within another local school system's attendance zone may not be denied service but may be placed on a waiting list until all children who do reside within the district are enrolled and may be required to pay out-of-district tuition depending on local board of education policies.

3.3 Children with Disabilities

A child who is age eligible for the Pre-K program and is identified as eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shall not be denied access to the Pre-K program. Placement in appropriate special education and related services is determined by the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and recommendations of the placement committee.

When the Pre-K provider refers a child suspected of having disabilities to the local school system, the referral request must be submitted to the special education program in the public school system in which the child resides.

Note: Dual enrollment in public school system preschool disabilities classes and Georgia's Pre-K program is permitted.

3.4 Child Registration Form

Bright from the Start child registration forms must be used when registering a child for Georgia's Pre-K Program. Forms are available at www.decal.ga.gov. There are two different forms available: one in English and one in Spanish. For private childcare providers, a Parental Agreement form is also available for your use, if needed. Providers should select the appropriate form(s) for their type of program and print copies on **yellow** paper. A parent or guardian must complete a registration form for each child registering in the program. The complete child registration form must be filed in each child's file and kept on-site for review.

3.5 Student Social Security Numbers

Social security numbers are used to help identify students on rosters. Providers should request a copy of each enrolled student's social security card; however, parents cannot be required to submit the information. If a parent chooses not to submit the social security card, providers should ask the parent to complete the *Student Social Security Number Information* form (See Appendix B). If the provider has a similar form or SSN waiver, they may choose to use that form. A copy of each student's social security card or completed *Student Social Security Number Information* form (or similar form) should be kept on-site for review by the Pre-K consultant.

3.6 Waiting Lists

A waiting list shall be maintained at the site level for all children who complete a registration form but are not attending due to lack of space. All families asking to be placed on the waiting list must complete the *Wait List Information* Form (See Appendix C). The Wait List Information Forms must be kept on-site and available to Bright from the Start staff.

Entering waiting list information into PANDA is mandatory and must be reported with the first roster and updated each roster reporting period.

3.7 Category One and Category Two Designation After Enrollment

Children should not be identified as Category One and Category Two at the time of enrollment; however, the Pre-K provider is responsible for determining Category One or Category Two designation after enrollment. All families should complete the *Roster Information* form (Appendix D) which should be kept on site by review by the Pre-K consultant. In addition, the provider should request appropriate documentation of Category One services (such as copies of cards with current dates, current statements, etc.) and maintain documentation in student file. This information must be reported to Bright from the Start on the first roster and updated each roster reporting period. Category One documentation must be current prior to each roster submission.

3.8 Procedures for Suspension or Disenrollment of a Child from the Program

Suspension Procedures

Immediate Suspension

An immediate suspension for up to two (2) days can be made at any time the Pre-K provider determines a child is causing harm to himself/herself or others. Programs can implement immediate suspension (up to two days) on a maximum of three occasions per child. No Bright from the Start prior approval is needed; however, the program's Pre-K consultant must be notified

using the *Suspension Notification Form for Consultant* (See Appendix E) that such action has been taken.

Extended Suspension

An extended suspension (i.e., more than two days and/or more than three incidents of immediate suspension) requires prior approval from Bright from the Start. **Programs must contact their Pre-K consultant to discuss requests for extended suspension.** The follow information is needed to request an extended suspension.

- Reason(s) why extended suspension is being requested and the length of the extended suspension
- Attempted interventions to help the child benefit from the program, including any immediate suspension information
- All documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes showing ongoing involvement with the parents
- Resource Coordinator actions if applicable
- Behavioral and instructional observations of the child supporting the extended suspension request
- Documentation of consultation with local school system special needs personnel, results of application of suggested interventions, and status of special education referral if applicable
- Documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e., Inclusion Coordinator, child's pediatrician, counseling services, etc.)

Extended suspension requests and documentation should be mailed directly to the Pre-K Inclusion Coordinator:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Attention: Suspensions
10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30303

Disenrollment Procedures

Once a child has been enrolled, he/she cannot be disenrolled from the Pre-K program unless it is determined that he/she is:

- chronically disruptive
 - Represents a habitual pattern of behavior (as opposed to the rare or occasional outburst on the part of an acutely fatigued or stressed child); and
 - Repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the other students to learn; and/or
 - Involves three (3) or more incidents of aggression (fighting, bullying or threatening, use of weapon that could cause serious injury), significant property damage or destruction, theft, and repeated violation of rules, age-appropriate social norms, or rights of others.
- causing harm to himself/herself or others
- chronically tardy or absent from the program (See Section 3.9)
- not enrolled in extended day program and is continually picked up late (See Section 3.9)

Disenrollment requires prior approval from Bright from the Start. Disenrollment without prior approval shall automatically place a school/center on probation. Pre-K providers must submit the following information to Bright from the Start:

- Reason(s) why disenrollment is being requested
- Attempted interventions to help the child benefit from the program, including any suspension information
- All documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes showing ongoing involvement with the parents
- Resource Coordinator documentation if applicable
- Behavioral and instructional observations of the child supporting the requested disenrollment
- All documentation of consultation with local school system special needs personnel, results of application of suggested interventions, and status of special education referral if applicable
- Documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e., Inclusion Coordinator, child's pediatrician, counseling services, etc.)

Disenrollment requests and documentation should be mailed directly to the Pre-K Inclusion Coordinator:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Attention: Suspensions/Disenrollment
10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30303

Final approval for disenrollment requests will be made by the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K upon review of all documentation.

3.9 Procedures for Chronic Absenteeism or Tardiness

Chronic tardiness is defined as late arrival or early departure more than once per week. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than two days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation. Chronic tardiness or absenteeism may also be defined by an established regular attendance pattern(s), e.g., if a child is late every Monday or absent every Tuesday or leaves early every Friday.

Providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/guardians of children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or routinely leave the program early in improving attendance. A meeting with the parent/guardian should occur to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred using the *Chronic Absenteeism or Tardiness Report* (See Appendix F) for disenrollment consideration.

Children who do not attend class, are late, or leave early for 10 consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation, **must** be removed from the roster, and Bright from the Start must be immediately notified in writing that such action has been taken.

Note: A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five additional school days per school year, for days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave. Families shall provide a written statement for the child's file to document the absence.

Attendance issues should be mailed directly to:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
ATTN: Tardiness/ Absences
10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30303

3.10 Health Services

All children attending Georgia's Pre-K Program must have a Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examinations (Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3300) and a DHR Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231). Form 3231 must have either the *date of expiration* or *school attendance* block checked. Children who attend Pre-K must be up-to-date on all immunizations required for school entry.

Children may register and begin attending before completion of these examinations and certificates. However, the immunization certificate must be on file within 30 calendar days and the Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examinations (EED) indicating that children have passed these screenings must be on file within 90 calendar days of the start of the Pre-K program. Children are not required to have evidence of age-appropriate immunizations or certificates prior to these 30-day or 90-day time frames.

Expired certificates must be updated within 30 calendar days of the expiration date. Any child who does not have a completed certificate within the 30- or 90-calendar day time frames should be asked not to return to the program until an updated certificate is provided and is on-site. A child who presents a valid appointment card for either a 3231 or 3300 appointment can remain in the program until the date of the appointment. An updated certificate, letter from a physician about continued treatment, or another appointment card should be provided upon the child's return to the program.

Pre-K providers should document follow-up on "untestable" or provisional status of EEDs and assist parents in getting the child screened. If a box is marked Needs Further Professional Examination, families should be asked to bring updated and completed certificates after each appointment and follow-up visit. The Pre-K site should have documentation of the follow-up (i.e., doctor's notes, scheduled appointments, information from parents, etc.). It is the goal of the Pre-K program to have a completed and valid certificate (3231 and 3300) for each child enrolled in the Pre-K program prior to Kindergarten registration.

When children enter the program later in the year, the Pre-K provider shall make every effort to obtain EEDs as soon as possible to identify any follow-up needed. Waiting 90 days to obtain EEDs for children who enroll later in the school year may not leave sufficient time to identify problems that could hinder the child's ability to learn.

4.0 Instruction

4.1 Approved Curricula

The Pre-K provider must provide a complete educational program in accordance with age-appropriate instructional practice and use a Bright from the Start approved curriculum. During the 2008-2009 school year, a curricula review was conducted; the updated list of approved curricula for 2009-2010 is below.

Curriculum	Company
AlphaSkills	AlphaSkills, Inc.
Blueprint for Early Literacy	Children's Literacy Initiative
Breakthrough to Literacy	SRA/Wright Group McGraw-Hill
Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence	Core Knowledge Foundation
Creative Curriculum	Teaching Strategies, Inc.
Curiosity Corner	Success for All Foundation
Doors to Discovery	SRA/Wright Group McGraw-Hill
Exceed Preschool Curriculum	School Specialty Childcraft Education
HighScope Curriculum	HighScope Educational Research Foundation
Imagine It!	SRA/Wright Group McGraw-Hill
Let's Begin with the Letter People	Abrams Learning Trends
Links to Literacy	Episcopal Children's Services
Opening the World of Learning	Pearson
Passports: Experiences for Pre-K Success	HighReach Learning
Pinnacle Curriculum	ChildCare Education Institute
Scholastic Early Childhood Program	Scholastic Education Group
The DLM Early Childhood Express	SRA/Wright Group McGraw-Hill
The InvestiGator Club	Robert-Leslie Publishing

Guidelines for Choosing a Curriculum

Each Pre-K program must choose an approved curriculum; must purchase the curriculum; and must pay for training associated with the curriculum. Bright from the Start does not provide additional funding for purchasing a curriculum or for the requisite training. Providers must use their existing Pre-K budget to purchase curriculum; therefore, providers should explore content, costs, and hours of training needed when considering a curriculum.

Continuation programs may change curriculums by submitting a completed *Request for Curriculum Form* (Appendix G) to their Pre-K consultant. If the request is approved, the program will be notified of the change via PANDA. New programs will be required to select a specific curriculum after a grant agreement is awarded.

Note: All approved curriculum companies have been invited to attend 2009 Fall Director Training to showcase their materials and to answer providers' questions. Pre-K providers may also directly contact any company in which they are interested. Detailed information about each curriculum is available on the Bright from the Start website.

4.2 Locally Developed Curriculum

Pre-K providers desiring to use a locally developed curriculum must submit the curriculum for approval through the curricula review process. This process takes place every three to five years. Bright from the Start must approve any locally developed curriculum before it is implemented in a program.

4.3 Supplemental Curriculum

Bright from the Start must approve any supplemental curriculum. Pre-K providers must submit written requests for approval to their Pre-K consultant. Written approval of the supplemental curriculum from Bright from the Start is required and must be kept on-site for consultant review.

4.4 Montessori Curriculum

A Pre-K program must have written approval from Bright from the Start before choosing Montessori as a curriculum. Approval will be based on teacher credentials, materials and equipment, and adherence to the Montessori philosophy. Any provider wanting to choose Montessori as their curriculum must send a written request to the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K. Programs **currently** implementing the Montessori curriculum will **not** be required to submit a letter seeking approval; however, existing Montessori sites will have to meet all revisions to the Montessori PQA, new material requirements, and Montessori teacher credential requirements to continue offering a Montessori curriculum.

A program using the Montessori curriculum must have a Montessori credentialed lead teacher to be in compliance. The lead teacher with Montessori credentials could also be certified or have a four-year degree and receive payment accordingly. (See Section 12.3) Additional information about Montessori materials and the Montessori Program Quality Assessment (PQA) can be found on the Bright from the Start website.

4.5 Lesson Plans

Written lesson plans containing specific instructional activities are required for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day. Lesson plans are expected to be completed weekly and kept on-site for the entire school year. Lesson plans should be kept organized and easily accessible for consultant review. Lesson plans, current and past, will be reviewed by the Pre-K consultant while completing the PQA.

The lesson plans should be based on Bright from the Start content standards and include educational experiences in language/literacy, math, science, social studies, creative (music, art, and drama), social and emotional, and physical development. A corresponding content standard(s) should be included on the lesson plan with each of the planned instructional activities. Outside play should be included in the written lesson plans. Meals and rest time will make up a portion of

the 6.5 hour instructional day. The PQA Definitions and Clarifications provide additional clarifications and information in reference to requirements.

4.6 Assessment

All Georgia's Pre-K Programs are required to implement the Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment including the Work Sampling System and the Georgia's Pre-K Progress Report. Any additional resource assessment testing must have prior approval in writing from the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K on a yearly basis. In addition, Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment documents including the Pre-K Progress Report form may not be altered in any way without prior approval from the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K.

The following student assessment data must be retained for a minimum of three years as specified in the grant agreement:

- The Work Sampling System P-4 Developmental Checklist
- The Georgia's Pre-K Progress Report (pages 1 and 2)
- Documentation of Conferences

New teachers (who have never taught in Georgia's Pre-K Program) will receive Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment training on day three of the four-day New Teacher Institute.

See Appendix H for the *Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment Program Information*.

4.7 Parent Participation

The Pre-K provider must provide opportunities for parents to participate in their child's educational experience. Parents should be encouraged to volunteer their time, talents, and experiences in the classroom. Additionally, the Pre-K provider must conduct parent meetings to keep parents informed throughout the school year.

Information on each child's performance including the Georgia's Pre-K Progress Report should be shared with parents or guardians at the two documented family conferences required during the school year. The two family conferences correspond to the fall/winter and spring reporting periods of the Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment. Documentation of these conferences should be kept in each child's on-site file.

4.8 Student Discipline

No employee will use any form of corporal punishment (which includes, but is not limited to, paddling, striking, or hitting) as a method of discipline in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Providers licensed by Bright from the Start can also refer to Bright from the Start's *Rules for Child Care Learning Centers*, Chapter 591-1-1-.11 (discipline). Failure to adhere to this guideline can result in automatic probation and termination of Pre-K funding.

4.9 Record Keeping

Current year records must be maintained at the Pre-K site. The Pre-K provider must retain the following records for a minimum of **three** years as specified in their grant agreement for Pre-K services:

- Pre-K registration form
- Student roster information form
- Daily child attendance records
- Class enrollment rosters
- Age documentation
- Residency documentation
- Assessment information (see Section 4.6)
- Documentation related to suspension and/or disenrollment
- Parent orientation and conference documentation
- Category One documentation
- Receipts and other financial records supporting expenses charged to Pre-K program (see Section 20.0)

5.0 Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

5.1 Maintenance

Pre-K providers must maintain adequate and appropriate equipment, materials, and supplies for each Pre-K classroom. All equipment must be in good repair. Pre-K providers should refer to the *Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* for recommendations. (See Appendix I)

5.2 Playground Equipment

Purchase of stationary playground equipment requires prior approval from a provider's Pre-K consultant. Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis. Purchases of stationary playground equipment with Pre-K funds without prior approval will result in automatic probation and a request for return of the expended funds. See Section 22.2 for the deadline on these requests.

5.3 Instructional Technology

Instructional technology purchases, such as computers or software, for Pre-K classes require prior approval from the Pre-K consultant assigned to the program. Purchases of instructional technology items with Pre-K funds made without approval will result in automatic probation and a request for return of the expended funds. See Section 22.2 for the deadline on these requests.

5.4 New/Expansion Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

All new/expansion programs must submit equipment, materials, and supplies purchase lists to their Pre-K consultant for approval **prior to purchasing**. Pre-K consultants will assist new/expansion programs in coordinating this process.

6.0 Delivery of Services

6.1 Classroom Delivery

Each classroom must have:

- Licensed space for a minimum of 20 children
- A minimum of 18 and a maximum of 20 children enrolled. Full funding is based on a class of 20

- Two adults (lead teacher, teacher assistant, and/or substitute) must be present and actively involved with children during the 6.5 hours of instructional time each day of operation with the exception of the one half to one hour nap time
- Approved equipment, materials, and supplies

Note: The maximum class size is 20 students. Exceeding the maximum number of enrolled children in a classroom can result in automatic probation. A Montessori setting serving more than 20 children requires prior approval AND the addition of staff to maintain the adult/child ratio of 1:10.

6.2 Program Delivery

The Pre-K program will provide 6.5 hours of instructional time, five days per week, and 180 days per year for eligible children. Pre-K providers are required to prepare and provide a school year calendar that accounts for 190 days which includes 180 days of service to families and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/duties (pre- and post-planning, staff development, in-service days). Set up and take down of the Pre-K classroom are expected to happen during pre- and post-planning days. Any changes to this requirement must be approved in writing by the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K.

6.3 Orientation

An on-site orientation for all teaching and administrative staff and an orientation for families must be provided within 20 working days of commencement of Pre-K services for children. The school year calendar should be shared with Pre-K staff and with families during orientations.

During family orientation, parents should receive written information concerning meal and extended day charges, including charges during times when children are out of school for holidays. Orientation provides an excellent opportunity for parents to complete the *Student Roster Information Form*, which captures gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and special education participation (See Appendix D). Documentation of these orientation sessions should be available in on-site program files.

See Appendix J for *Suggested Items to Discuss at Parent Orientation*. See Appendix K for *Pre-K Staff Orientation- Suggested Topics*.

6.4 Licensing

The facility must meet the licensing requirements of the appropriate licensing agencies. At a minimum, the license must cover the 6.5-hour instructional program.

6.5 Substitutes

The Pre-K provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute teacher assistant is present and working in the Pre-K classroom for each day that a lead teacher and/or teacher assistant is absent due to illness, required training, personal leave, etc. See Section 14.0.

6.6 Rest Time

To maximize instructional activities, rest time cannot exceed one hour per day except when necessary to address specific needs of individual children. Children who do not rest shall be given

quiet activities such as books and puzzles. All children must have a covering (sheet) on their individual rest equipment (mat or cot) and a covering (blanket) for themselves. During the scheduled rest period, a ratio of one adult providing direct supervision to 20 children is acceptable. Rest time cannot exceed one hour.

6.7 Other Program Components

- **No part of the Pre-K day may be religious in nature.**
- A “moment of silence” is an acceptable practice at mealtimes.
- Lunch, snacks, and supervised outdoor play are part of the Pre-K program.
- Breakfast may be included at the discretion of the Pre-K provider but should be offered prior to the start of the 6.5 hour instructional day.

Note: Breakfast as part of the instructional program (i.e., a teacher-directed language development time, a center-time activity, etc.) is permissible.

6.8 Program/Staff Hours

The 6.5 hours of instructional time should begin no earlier than 7:30 a.m. with hours of operation as delineated in the original approved application. The remaining 1.5 hours of the lead teacher and teacher assistant eight-hour day must be used for Pre-K program activities such as parent conferences, meetings with RCs, instructional planning, etc. Inappropriate duties for Pre-K teachers during the eight-hour day include bus driver, office manager, cook, and receptionist. Using Pre-K staff during the eight-hour Pre-K day to supervise children not enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program is unacceptable and will place the program on probation.

6.9 Transportation

Transportation services are optional and may be provided for enrolled Pre-K children at the discretion of the Pre-K provider. Transportation reimbursement shall be provided for any Category One child transported to and from the program on a daily basis as reported on rosters. The Pre-K provider may establish reasonable transportation zones. (See Section 19.1 for reimbursement rate)

Note: Field trips are considered part of the instructional program and are not considered transportation for purposes of reporting or funding.

6.10 Extended Day (Before and After School Care)

Bright from the Start does not require or provide extended day services. Extended day services for Pre-K children may be provided at the parent's expense and choice. Fees for all Pre-K children participating in extended day services should be reasonable. Bright from the Start recommends that fees for extended day services not exceed \$35-\$75 per week. Income eligible families may receive services through the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) subsidized child care program (CAPS). These arrangements should be made between the center, parents, and local DFCS office. See Appendix L for the *Georgia Lottery Funded Pre-K Referral for Before/ After School/ Extended Day* form.

7.0 Support Services

7.1 Objectives

Support services are a vital component to the success of the Pre-K program. Project Directors are responsible for carrying out the objectives (either directly or indirectly). The following objectives should serve as a guide for activities Pre-K providers should provide to all Pre-K children and their families:

Overall Objectives:

- Health – No child should exit the Pre-K program with an undetected condition that could hinder his/her ability to learn. Any child with identified needs should be referred to the proper resource or agency for access to and coordination of services. Documentation of referrals should be kept on-site.
- Child Development – Family knowledge of the child's development and involvement in their child's educational experience will be enhanced through informational seminars, volunteer opportunities at the center/school, parent/center conferences, etc. Families will be encouraged to read to their children daily and complete activities with their children.
- Community Resources – *Upon request*, families should be provided information about community resources such as GED, TANF, PeachCare for Kids, help in obtaining extended day services, etc.
- Kindergarten Readiness Initiative – Assistance will be provided to obtain all necessary documentation and health related requirements for kindergarten registration before the end of the Pre-K school year.

8.0 Program Fees and Extracurricular Activities

8.1 Program Fees

All children must receive the same instructional opportunities during the 6.5-hour instructional program day. Program fees may not be charged to Category One or Category Two families during this time. For example, if dance, art, or computer classes are included in the 6.5-hour day, these opportunities must be free and available to all Pre-K children.

No fees may be charged to any child for services needed to operate the instructional program, such as registration, curriculum fees, classroom supplies, etc. Bright from the Start recommends that providers not solicit "donations" of materials and supplies as most parents might consider it a mandate instead of a donation.

8.2 Field Trip Fees

Field trips are a part of the instructional program. Therefore, field trips made during the day must be free and available to all children. Parents who participate in field trips may be charged a fee. Pre-K funds may be used to provide field trips or other appropriate activities for the children.

8.3 Extracurricular Activities

Families may choose to participate in “extracurricular activities” such as school photographs. If they choose to participate, families may be charged fees for these extracurricular activities.

Note: If every Pre-K child is photographed, this activity may occur during the Pre-K instructional day.

8.4 Fee Structure

Policies explaining the fee structure for non-Pre-K program days (e.g., holiday/vacation times, teacher work days) for Category One and Category Two children, transportation (optional), and/or food services for Category Two children must be given to each family in writing. Copies of these policies should be kept on file. Bright from the Start may request copies of individual Pre-K provider fee structure policies. **While not required, Bright from the Start recommends that providers explain and have parents sign a statement that they understand charges for non-Pre-K program days and any transportation or meal fees.**

8.5 Category One Fees

The Pre-K provider may **not** charge Category One children any fees for transportation services (if provided) or instructional services components of the program during the 180 days.

Pre-K providers may **not** charge Category One children fees for food services. Pre-K funds may be used to purchase food if no Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funding is received.

8.6 Category Two Fees

The Pre-K provider may charge reasonable fees for health services, food services, and/or transportation services (if provided) to Category Two children/families.

8.7 Meal Fees

Bright from the Start recommends that Pre-K providers charge no more than \$30 a week for meal fees to Category Two families. (Pre-K providers may **not** charge Category Two families fees for food for any child for whom CACFP reimbursement is received.) Parental complaints regarding excessive meal fees will be investigated.

Pre-K providers should have a written policy regarding meals served at the program including whether or not outside food for meals is allowed in the center. Programs may set up their own policies regarding outside food; however, if the center allows food to be brought in for any other age group, then children enrolled in the Georgia’s Pre-K Program must also be allowed to bring in outside food.

Pre-K providers should contact their Pre-K consultant about continued non-payment of meal fees by a Category Two family. Disenrollment will be at the discretion of Bright from the Start.

8.8 School Uniforms

The purchase of school uniforms cannot be required for participation in the Pre-K program, including special attire such as t-shirts for field trips. Centers with uniform policies may request

that parents dress children in uniforms. However, eligible children cannot be denied access to the Pre-K program for failure to meet the request. Providers are urged to provide uniforms for those who cannot afford them. With prior approval, Pre-K funds may be used for this purpose.

8.9 Graduation

Bright from the Start does not recommend “graduation” for four-year-old children as an appropriate activity. Bright from the Start believes that transitioning from Pre-K to Kindergarten marks the beginning of the child’s formal schooling experience, not the end. More appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, a field day, an open house, family/child picnic, or dinner. Graduation ceremonies should not be conducted during instructional time. In addition, practice for a graduation ceremony or other programs should not be conducted during instructional time. Pre-K funds may not be used for any type of “graduation” activities.

9.0 Bright from the Start Monitoring and Technical Assistance

9.1 Pre-K Consultant Support

Bright from the Start Pre-K staff work closely with providers throughout the year and are available for consultation regarding questions about the program, problems with maintaining enrollment, approval of equipment/materials/supplies requests, training needs, etc. Staff will provide specific technical assistance to bring Pre-K programs into compliance with program requirements and thereby allow them to maintain their funding viability.

9.2 On-Site Evaluation

Bright from the Start Pre-K staff will make announced and unannounced visits throughout the year to monitor and evaluate program progress.

Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

Pre-K consultants will use the PQA to evaluate each Pre-K program, and the PQA will become part of the formal file. The PQA provides a “snapshot” of the Pre-K program and helps identify program strengths and areas that need improvement. Pre-K providers will be verbally informed of the program’s ratings and will be asked to sign a copy of the report on the day of the visit. A copy of the report will be left at the center. A copy of the PQA can be obtained from the Bright from the Start website (www.decal.ga.gov)

Any Not Met (NM) scores require a written response from the Pre-K Project Director within 10 days of the evaluation. The Pre-K consultant will use this documentation to determine technical assistance needs and appropriate follow-up steps. Bright from the Start staff will work closely with sites with identified needs to support them in addressing program deficiencies. Bright from the Start will not change PQA scores based on the written response.

Programs implementing a Montessori curriculum can download a copy of the Montessori PQA from the Bright from the Start website (www.decal.ga.gov).

Completing a PQA self-study is an excellent way to prepare for a visit from the Pre-K consultant and helps identify areas in need of technical assistance. PQA self-study forms can be found on the

website (www.decal.ga.gov). Bright from the Start has also developed a PQA online learning module. For information about accessing the PQA online learning module, Pre-K providers should contact their Pre-K consultant.

10.0 Probation

10.1 Definition and Reasons for Probation

Probation is a status that warns a provider of the possibility of funding loss due to program quality issues or failure to follow Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines. Programs on probation are not guaranteed continuing classes for the following year. Grant agreements will be held or not be offered to sites on probation. (See Section 21.0)

Reasons for probation:

- Failure to correct on-going quality issues
- Multiple instances of failing to follow Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines
- Failure to submit mandatory reports by due dates
- Automatic Probation
 - Disenrollment or extended suspension without prior approval (See Section 3.6)
 - Failure to submit required information and documents to Bright from the Start (including roster and wait lists)
 - Inappropriate staffing (See Section 6.1)
 - Ineligible student birthdates and lack of birth documentation
 - Lack of credentialed lead teacher (See Section 12.3)
 - Exceeding the maximum allowance of 20 students per class
 - Inaccurate roster reporting
 - Purchases of stationary playground equipment with Pre-K funds without prior approval (See Section 5.2)
 - Purchases of instructional technology items with Pre-K funds without prior approval (See Section 5.3)
 - Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with Bright from the Start program requirements (Pre-K, Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, or Audit)
 - Moving a Pre-K class without permission from Bright from the Start

10.2 Probation Process

- Pre-K consultants will use the PQA to evaluate the quality of the Pre-K program. **The Pre-K Project Director must submit a written response for Not Met (NM) and/or Partially Met (PM) scores within 10 days of the evaluation.** Additional technical assistance may be requested if needed.
- All programs receiving 45% or more (15 indicators) Partially Met (PM) and/or NM scores will be referred to the Bright from the Start Pre-K Quality Support Program resulting in a probationary status or a watch list status. Watch list is a status that warns a provider of the possibility of probation.
- All Pre-K sites on probation or watch list will receive a minimum of three PQA visits during the school year to monitor and report on progress.
- An office conference with the Pre-K Project Director and Bright from the Start staff will be scheduled for programs on probation. During the meeting, the Project Director and Bright

from the Start staff will work together to develop an action plan to bring the program into compliance. A technical assistance plan will also be developed at this time.

- Any site on probation must also complete the following:
 - PQA online learning module
 - Assessment online learning module
 - Attend a quality tour hosted by Bright from the Start

Sites remaining in probationary status for more than one school year may lose funding for at least one class. Reducing the number of classes has been an effective means for quality improvement; it is easier to maintain quality with fewer classes. Sites with only one class may lose all Pre-K funding.

10.3 Peer Review Process

Programs that continue to have unresolved probation issues, despite technical assistance, may have their Georgia's Pre-K Program grant agreement denied or revoked. In such circumstances, providers may appeal the Bright from the Start decision before a Peer Review committee. The Peer Review process is not available to Pre-K programs identified with serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with program requirements (Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, Audit/AUP, Quality Initiatives), fraudulent rosters or teacher credentials, audit (Pre-K or federal nutrition programs) irregularities, loss of nutrition program due to serious deficiencies, low enrollment, and/or repeated issues with teacher credentials.

PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

11.0 General Personnel and Training Information

11.1 Criminal Background Checks

All Pre-K program personnel in licensed child care learning centers must receive a satisfactory criminal background check with documentation on file with the Pre-K provider. All Pre-K personnel in public schools must comply with public school regulations concerning background checks.

11.2 Employees

All Pre-K program personnel are employees of the Pre-K provider for whom they work, not Bright from the Start or the State of Georgia.

11.3 Salaries

Bright from the Start **requires** Pre-K providers to pay lead teachers a minimum salary based on the teacher's credentials. This minimum salary reflects 90% of the salary funded by Bright from the Start to the provider. The minimum salary does not include any additional benefits the teacher may receive.

Providers have the ability to set salary levels as long as they meet the minimum salary listed below:

Credential		Provider Receives	Minimum Salary Requirement
National Board Certified*		\$33,424.00	\$30,081.60
PSC Certified		\$33,424.00	\$30,081.60
FLD702	ELEMENTARY GRADES (P-8)		
FLD708	SP ED GENERAL CURRICULUM CONSULTATIVE / ECE (P-5)		
FLD808	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (P-5)		
FLD870	BIRTH THROUGH FIVE		
FLD826	SP ED PRESCHOOL (AGES 3-5) ENDORSEMENT		
FLD871	BIRTH THROUGH FIVE ENDORSEMENT		
Out-of-state Certified (ECE/ELEM) for one year only		\$33,424.00	\$30,081.60
PSC Certified (P-12)		\$24,252.25	\$21,827.02
FLD732	READING (P-12)		
FLD760	HEALTH (P-12)		
FLD761	HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P-12)		
FLD764	ART (P-12)		
FLD767	MUSIC (P-12)		
FLD768	SP ED PHYSICAL & HEALTH DISABILITIES (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
FLD777	SP ED LEARNING DISABILITIES (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
FLD778	SP ED BEHAVIOR DISORDERS (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
FLD797	SP ED DEAF ED (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
FLD798	SP ED GENERAL CURRICULUM (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
FLD805	SP ED ADAPTED CURRICULUM (P-12) CONSULTATIVE		
Four-year College Degree		\$24,252.25	\$21,827.02
Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (ECE)			
Bachelor in Elementary Education			
Bachelor in Child Development / Family and Consumer Sciences			
Bachelor in Psychology PLUS approved ECE credential			
Bachelor in Social Work PLUS approved ECE credential			
Bachelor with a minimum of 15 semester / 25 quarter approved Child Development Related successfully completed hours			
Two-year College Degree		\$20,014.48	\$18,013.03
Associate of Science /Arts (ECE or related)			
Associate of Applied Science/Technology (ECE or related)			
Montessori Diploma (ECE, min. two years coursework)			
Insufficient Credential		\$13,342.98	\$12,008.69

*pending 2009 – 2010 salary rate confirmation

Salaries are negotiated between the provider and the teacher. Providers are required to pay a minimum of 90% of the total salary funded by Bright from the Start. The minimum salary does not include any additional benefits the teacher may receive.

Pre-K providers should address questions about teaching credentials to panda.teachers@dec.al.ga.gov Pre-K providers should address questions about teacher salary to panda.finance@dec.al.ga.gov

11.4 Reporting Teacher Changes

Programs must submit a *Teacher Notification* form to Bright from the Start when the status of a lead teacher changes. This form must be completed each time a new teacher is hired for a Pre-K classroom or when a lead teacher's credential level changes. Changes in teachers must be reported during the same roster period. Failure to report a change in lead teacher within the month of the change may result in the program being placed on probation.

Note: A change in credentials will be accepted for one past roster period only. For example, if a teacher is issued a Professional Standards Commission certification in October, but Appendix P is not submitted until February, the new certified credential will only be retro paid for January. It is essential that rosters be maintained as current as possible.

See Appendix P for the *Teacher Notification* form.

12.0 Lead Teachers

12.1 Days of Service

All lead teachers are funded based on a full 10-month salary. Pre-K providers are required to staff each Pre-K class with a lead teacher for 190 days of service – 180 days of classroom instruction to Pre-K children and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/duties (pre/post planning, staff development, in-service days). Bright from the Start does not maintain personnel policies for Pre-K teachers. Pre-K programs should provide teachers with a contract or work agreement outlining sick leave and holiday policies.

Lead teacher payments are calculated using the confirmed credential of the lead teacher rate (See Section 11.3) multiplied by the actual number of days of employment each month. Pre-K classes without a sufficiently credentialed lead teacher are paid at the insufficient rate, which is equal to the teacher assistant salary.

Note: If a Pre-K provider requires teachers to work more than the 190 days required by the Pre-K program, the Pre-K provider cannot use Pre-K program funds to cover the additional work time.

12.2 Age Requirement

All lead teachers must be 21 years of age or older. **Exception:** Lead teachers who have a valid AA credential or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement.

12.3 Credential / Certification Requirements

All lead teachers must hold a minimum of an associate degree that meets the credential requirements outlined below.

A lead teacher must have one of the following valid and current certificates or credentials from a nationally or state recognized institution approved by Bright from the Start. Questions or concerns about teacher credentials can be sent to: panda.teachers@dec.al.ga.gov.

Certified–

Georgia teaching certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) in

- Early Childhood Education (grades P-5),
- Birth to Five
- Elementary Education
- Birth to Five Endorsement
- Special Education Curriculum Consultative/ECE (P-5)

OR

- Out-of-state, valid, and current official teaching certificates in Early Childhood or Elementary Education (conditionally acceptable during the teacher's first Georgia's Pre-K school year)

Note: Only the certificates listed above qualify for certified teacher funding rates. PSC certification is verified through review of www.gapsc.com for all certified teachers. The “**Issue Date**” is the beginning date of certification for Georgia's Pre-K teachers. Bright from the Start does not issue waivers for certification; therefore, teachers who have pending certification are paid at the four-year credential level if their bachelor degree meets the requirements denoted below.

Teachers receiving National Board Certification shall receive the salary bonus available to all public school teachers under the guidelines set for qualification. The Pre-K provider is responsible for supplying adequate documentation to support this status. Further information regarding teacher certification can be found on the PSC website (www.gapsc.com).

OR

PSC Certified Endorsements Accepted at the Four-Year College Degree Level

- Education field specified with P-12 endorsement in the following fields will be accepted:
 - Health and Physical Education (P-12)
 - Art Education (P-12)
 - Music (P-12)
 - Reading (P-12)
 - Special Education (P-5)
 - Special Education (P-12)
 - **MIDDLE or SECONDARY certificates do not qualify.**

Any additional P-12 endorsements must be submitted through the teacher credential waiver system for review and approval.

A Four-Year College Degree

- In early childhood or elementary education
- An education/child development related field documented by an official transcript from the college/university (15 semester hours / 25 quarter hours of early childhood education coursework is the minimum to qualify as related field).
- Family and Consumer Science, or
- In psychology or social work (not sociology) **PLUS** one of the following:
 - valid Early Childhood Care and Education or Child Development postsecondary technical institute diploma or degree, or
 - valid Advanced Early Childhood Care and Education or Child Development and Related Care postsecondary technical institute diploma or degree, or
 - Associate degree (AA, AS, AAS, or AAT) in Early Childhood Education, or
 - a Montessori diploma (for approved Montessori Curriculum sites), or
 - a valid, nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential

OR

Technical Institute Degree, Associate Degree, or Montessori Diploma

- Early Childhood Care and Education or Child Development postsecondary technical institute degree, or
- Advanced Early Childhood Care and Education or Child Development and Related Care postsecondary technical institute degree, or
- Associate degree (AA, AS, AAT or AAS) in Early Childhood Education, or
- Montessori diploma (equivalent to two years of coursework) for approved Montessori curriculum sites.

Note: Other associate degrees or diplomas (such as General Studies, Liberal Arts, or Teacher Education) are not acceptable.

12.4 Out-of-Country Credentials

Credentials from outside the U.S. need to be evaluated by an educational interpreting agency such as Educational Credential Evaluators Inc. or World Education Services Inc. so that a U.S. equivalency can be determined. Pre-K providers can view the PSC Accepted Credential Agency List at www.gapsc.com – under the Certification tab, select Rules. Then click on rule 505.2.21. In the document that opens, under item number 6, select the link for identified agencies. Pre-K providers can also contact the PSC for additional information on approved credential evaluators.

12.5 Online Credentials

Online degree programs can be verified through the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at www.sacscoc.org or with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>. Other online degree programs may be acceptable with proof of approved credibility and certification.

12.6 Teacher Credential Waiver Process

A teacher credential waiver process has been developed so that Bright from the Start can work with providers on obtaining high quality teachers. Closely related degrees with evidence that the teacher is continuing formal education working toward one of the credentials listed above will be considered. When considering approval of waivers, Bright from the Start will also take into account prior program performance.

Waiver requests and all supporting documentation must be submitted to Bright from the Start in writing via mail. Electronic and faxed copies are not accepted. See Appendix M for the *Request for Waiver of Lead Teacher Credential* form. Questions or concerns about teacher credentials can be sent to: panda.teachers@dec.al.ga.gov.

13.0 Teacher Assistants

13.1 Days of Service

All teacher assistants are funded based on a full 10-month salary. Pre-K providers are required to staff each Pre-K class with a teacher assistant for 190 days of service – 180 days of classroom instruction to Pre-K children and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/ duties (pre/post planning, staff development, in-service days.) Funding for the teacher assistant is included in the Program Summary Chart in Section 19.1. Additional certificates or credentials held by teacher assistants will not increase the level of Bright from the Start funding for that position.

Note: If a Pre-K provider requires teacher assistants to work more than the 190 days required by the Pre-K program, the Pre-K provider cannot use Pre-K program funds to cover the additional work time.

13.2 Employment Requirements

A teacher assistant must meet **ALL** of the following minimum requirements:

- Be 21 years of age or older. **Exception:** Teacher assistants who have a valid AA credential or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement.
- Have experience working with children younger than five years of age.
- Possess proficient verbal and written communication skills.

13.3 Credential/Certification Requirements

Teacher assistants are required to hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or higher.

Any one of the credentials/degrees listed below will meet the new credential requirement.

- Valid Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (issued by the Council for Professional Recognition)
- Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education
- Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education
- Associate Degree (AA, AS, AAS, AAT) in any field
- Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood in any field

- Master's Degree in Early Childhood in any field

Note: Newly hired Pre-K teacher assistants must hold a minimum of a CDA or one of the above credentials.

Returning Pre-K teacher assistants who do not currently hold any of the above credentials/degrees will NOT be required to apply for a waiver for the 2009-2010 school year. Bright from the Start will allow current teacher assistants to enroll in eligible programs of study leading to the award of one of the above ECE credentials or degrees. All Pre-K teacher assistants should earn a CDA or higher degree by the 2011-2012 school year. Pre-K providers must supply documentation of work toward an approved credential each year.

For more information about obtaining a CDA or higher degree, Pre-K providers should contact the Technical College System of Georgia at www.tcsq.edu. Information is also available through local resource and referral agencies.

14.0 Substitute Teachers

14.1 Substitute Teacher Employment Requirements

The Pre-K provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute teacher assistant is present and working in the Pre-K classroom (during the 180 day student school year) for each day that a lead teacher and/or teacher assistant is absent due to illness, required training, or personal leave, etc. A substitute teacher must meet ALL of the following minimum requirements:

Be 21 years of age. Exception: Substitute teachers who have a valid AA credential or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement.

Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Have experience working with children younger than five years of age.

Possess proficient verbal and written communication skills.

14.2 Long-Term Substitutes

A long-term substitute is a substitute for the lead teacher who will be in the Pre-K classroom for longer than three weeks (e.g., lead teacher on maternity leave or extended leave longer than three weeks). Programs are required to submit a *Long-Term Substitute Request* (Appendix N) form to their Pre-K consultant for approval. Programs should attempt to hire long-term substitutes with a credential equivalent to the credential of the original lead teacher. Long-term substitutes must be approved by Bright from the Start. Funding for long-term substitutes will be determined by Bright from the Start.

15.0 Professional Development

15.1 Attendance at Training

All administrative, teaching, and support staff listed below must attend one Bright from the Start sponsored training.

- Project Directors
- Site Directors

- Principals
- Lead Teachers
- Teachers Assistants
- Resource Coordinators

NOTE: All lead teachers and teacher assistants working in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms are required to meet the training requirement, including additional staff in Montessori classrooms and inclusion classrooms. Bright from the Start sponsored training is provided free of charge.

All lead teachers must attend a minimum of 15 hours of Bright from the Start approved training during the Pre-K year: 12 hours of Best Practices training and three hours of additional training from Best Practices, from the PQA online and the Assessment Online Modules with the appropriate documentation, or other training approved by the Pre-K Consultant. Certificates to document attendance and completion of training must be kept on file at the Pre-K site. Refer to the Bright from the Start Professional Development Training Schedule 2009-2010 found on the Bright from the Start website for details on training.

The Pre-K Project Director is responsible for distributing this information to their sites. Training schedules are available to download from the Bright from the Start website (www.decal.ga.gov). Once training preferences are identified, Pre-K providers can register staff for training at www.decal.ga.gov/trainingregistration. For help with training needs, Pre-K providers should call the Training Registration Department at 404-463-4109.

"No shows" at training will be charged \$50. Providers who register participants for training and do not cancel in writing (FAX or e-mail) within 24 hours of the start of the training are defined as "no shows." Providers cannot substitute inappropriate staff in the place of a staff registered for training. For example, if a lead teacher cannot attend training, a site director or RC cannot attend for him/her. In the case of a "no show," \$50 for each participant will be deducted from the next Pre-K payment. **In the case of a dispute, the provider must present written confirmation from Bright from the Start that the training was cancelled within the required timeframe.**

"Repeat training" for teaching staff will also be charged \$50. Providers should ask new teachers what Bright from the Start training they have received in the past before registering them for training. In the case of a "repeat training," \$50 for each participant will be deducted from the next Pre-K payment.

Child Care Licensing Information

All Bright from the Start sponsored training is approved for licensing purposes for second year* lead teachers and teacher assistants. One hour of training counts as one hour of required training for licensed child care learning centers for regulatory purposes. First year* lead teachers and teacher assistants, who have not worked in a Pre-K program at another site, may utilize only four clock hours of Best Practices training toward their mandatory 10 hours of training.

*First year and second year refer to number of years a teacher has worked at the center in all capacities, not just Pre-K. See Bright from the Start's *Rules for Child Care Learning Centers*, Chapter 591-1-1-.33 (Staff Training).

15.2 Importance of Training

To maintain quality standards, annual training is required for all staff directly associated with the Pre-K program. Bright from the Start consultants shall verify documentation of staff attendance at training sessions. Failure of providers and their staff to participate in required training during the school year shall place their program in noncompliance and may jeopardize future funding.

15.3 Purpose of Teacher Training

Bright from the Start offers multiple training opportunities for Pre-K teachers. This training is not designed or intended to prepare personnel to become Pre-K teachers. Each provider is responsible for ensuring that all teaching staff are qualified and able to deliver quality instruction on the date they are hired. Bright from the Start training is intended to enhance the skills and knowledge of teaching staff already prepared to teach in the Pre-K program. Lack of availability of Bright from the Start sponsored teacher training should not impact the ability of staff to deliver quality instruction to Pre-K children.

15.4 Training Reimbursement to Staff

Pre-K funds should be used to pay for substitutes and costs associated with staff travel (lodging and meals in conjunction with overnight travel, mileage, parking, etc.) to all required training sessions. Pre-K funds should cover salaries and wages as well as travel expenses for staff when attending required training sessions.

Note: Bright from the Start recommends that Pre-K providers develop and distribute travel/expense policies to employees prior to travel; that providers discuss travel/expense policies with employees; and that providers ask employees to sign a statement that they understand the policies before they travel.

FUNDING

16.0 Grant Award Notification and Initial Budgets

16.1 Application Process and Awarding of Grant Agreements

Grant agreements will be awarded to Pre-K providers through a competitive process subject to funding availability, previous program compliance (for continuation programs in good standing), and identified regional need. Compliance and standing with other Bright from the Start programs (Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, Audits, and Quality Initiatives) are also considered before awarding a grant agreement. Programs are considered in “good standing” if they have maintained full classes, met all program and reporting requirements, met child care licensing regulations if applicable, met federal nutrition program rules if applicable, have no unresolved audit or reconciliation issues, and are not on probation. Bright from the Start will enter into a grant agreement with public and private providers for Pre-K services.

All Pre-K continuation and expansion applications must be submitted electronically through the **Pre-K Application and Database Access (PANDA)**. No paper applications will be accepted. New applicants must download an application from the website and submit by mail.

Low Roster Numbers – Any applicant reporting less than 15 children on the third roster of the 2008-2009 school year will not automatically be awarded a continuation class. Bright from the Start will review final rosters; contact providers directly concerning low numbers of children; and make a final determination about continuation of services.

Note: In past years, providers have operated partially or fully funded private classes in an effort to receive funding from Bright from the Start. **Providers must understand that operating private classes or funding classes at their own expense does not guarantee Bright from the Start funding.** Parents should be informed prior to the beginning of school if their children are enrolled in a class that is not funded by Bright from the Start.

16.2 Notification and Grant Awards

- All approved programs receive written notification of approval.
- Notification will include information on numbers of classes/children to be served, funding, and RC grant approval if applicable.
- Start-up funds for new/expansion programs will be processed on or before August 1, 2009 for providers with executed start-up grant agreements.
- The first of 10 operating payments will be processed by August 12, 2009 for providers with executed grant agreements.

Note: All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays.

16.3 Class Budget

Classes with enrollments of 20 students will receive full funding. Funding for classes with fewer than 20 students will be reduced by 1/20th for each child below 20. Classes with less than 17 students are subject to cancellation at the discretion of Bright from the Start.

16.4 Grant Agreement Signatory

The legal signatory for the program/company/school system/etc. applying for the grant must sign the grant agreement.

16.5 Multi-County and Multi-Program Pre-K Providers

Bright from the Start will issue one operating grant agreement containing separate funding amounts for each site. Funds are class-specific; therefore, Pre-K providers must spend the required minimum levels for teacher salaries and supplies for each class at each site.

16.6 Funding Calculation

Payments are calculated at the class level summing the instructional and non-instructional components for the class and then prorating the summed amount by the number of eligible children being served. The number of eligible children is calculated on a half-month convention based on submitted roster data.

16.7 Start-Up/Operating Grants

Start-up/operating grant agreements will be issued upon Bright from the Start approval. One grant award notification will contain specific dollar amounts for new/expansion classroom start-up equipment, materials, and supplies, and another grant agreement will contain specific dollar amounts for Pre-K classroom operations. Start-up funds for new/expansion programs will be available on or before August 1, 2009 for providers with executed start-up grant agreements. The first of 10 operating payments will be processed by August 12, 2009 for providers with executed grant agreements.

17.0 Expenditure Requirements

17.1 Expenditure Guidelines

The following expenditure guidelines apply to all Pre-K providers:

- The Pre-K provider may use no more than six percent of the budget for administrative expenses. Start-up funds for new or expansion classes should be not included in this calculation.
- No more than six percent of the RC grant funds can be used for administrative purposes.
- All programs must spend a minimum of \$1,200 per classroom on classroom equipment, replacement classroom materials, classroom supplies, and/or additional classroom materials. These funds are provided in the Pre-K operating grant agreement. This amount is in addition to start-up funds received for new/expansion classes.
- Classroom supplies and materials should be selected from the *Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* (Appendix I). Flexibility related to classroom computer technology purchases and playground equipment is provided with prior approval from the Pre-K consultant, once the classroom is adequately equipped. (See Sections 5.2 and 5.3).
- Newly funded programs should refer to Section 24.0 in this document for additional guidelines.
- While Pre-K funding can be used for RC activities, RC grant funds cannot be used for Pre-K program expenses such as teacher salaries/benefits and general operating expenses.
- The Pre-K provider shall maintain full and complete program funding and expense records pertaining to the grant agreement for a period of three years beyond the ending date, or until all litigation, claims, or audit/review findings involving the records have been resolved if such claim or audit/review is started before the expiration date of the three-year period.

17.2 Record Keeping

The Pre-K provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual/mid-year reconciliation statement. If a Pre-K program is audited /reviewed and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to Bright from the Start. Examples of such records include federal and state payroll records to verify payment of lead teacher and teacher assistant salaries, original receipts for equipment, supplies, and materials for Pre-K classrooms and documentation of the Pre-K portion of operating expenses. See Section 20.0 for more details on audits/reviews.

Note: Misuse of funds may result in denial of current and future participation in the Pre-K program and/or in prosecution.

18.0 Reimbursement Process

18.1 Automatic Deposit of Funds

All payments will be deposited in the Pre-K provider's bank account via an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) process. Appropriate forms and instructions to allow for EFT were included in the application package. Providers are responsible for the correct routing of their payments by promptly notifying Bright from the Start of changes in bank account information or ownership. Providers are responsible for reviewing their monthly payments and payment documentation each month. After May 13, 2010, all Pre-K payments shall be final. No additional corrections, adjustments, or payment processing shall be made after this date.

18.2 Start-Up Funds

Providers will receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$8,000 for each new or expansion class to purchase equipment, supplies, and materials for the class.

18.3 Enrollment Requirements for Funding

Pre-K providers are expected to maintain the class enrollment levels specified in their grant agreement. Enrollment below 20 students will reduce payments.

18.4 Payments

- Start-up funds for equipment, materials, and supplies will be available on or before August 1, 2009 for new and expansion programs awarded prior to August 1.
- Operating funds will automatically be deposited in accounts in 10 monthly payments beginning in **August 2009**. If state data processing and bank processing are successful, the deposit will occur by the 12th of each month or next business day. **Note:** All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays.
- The final Pre-K payment for the year will be the **May 2010** payment.
- Local school systems will pay personnel summer salaries from 2009-2010 school year funds.
- Private providers who incur summer salary personnel expenses for the 2009-2010 school year should have written policies in place for payment of staff from funds other than Pre-K funds.

Note: Pre-K providers who maintain constant enrollments, uninterrupted teacher credentials, and RC services (if applicable) will receive the equivalent of 10 equal payments for the year. If these requirements are not met, individual payments will be adjusted accordingly.

18.5 Schedule of Payments

Ten (10) Payments	Level of Teacher Credentials and Number of Children	Ten (10) Months
Payment Date	Based On	For the Month of
August 12, 2009	Grant Agreement	August
September 12, 2009	1 st roster	September
October 13, 2009	2 nd roster	October
November 12, 2009	3 rd roster	November
December 12, 2009	3 rd roster	December
January 12, 2010	3 rd roster	January
February 12, 2010	4 th roster	February
March 12, 2010	5 th roster	March
April 13, 2010	6 th roster (Final)	April
May 12, 2010	6 th roster (Final)	May

Note: All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays.

18.6 Calculation of Payments

Payment calculations are based on student enrollment and the lead teacher credentials for each class as reported on the submitted roster.

- The August 2009 payment will be based on the executed grant agreement.
- If the enrollment and the lead teacher credential reported on each of the required rosters remains consistent with the approved grant agreement, no funding adjustment will be made.
- Roster data is critical to the payment calculation. As students leave the class or new students are added, current and prior payments will recalculate the total number of eligible children served each month using a half-month convention to retroactively recover overpayments or pay additional amounts for each class. Recording accurate begin dates and end dates for students and teachers on each roster is required to ensure accurate payment calculations.
- Lead teacher credentials and the number of enrolled children will be monitored. Documentation must be submitted to validate each lead teacher credential. If this documentation cannot be provided; differs from the credential specified in the grant agreement; or differs from the credential reported on the roster, payments will be adjusted to the credential level that can be validated. Payments will be retroactively adjusted for changes in teacher credentials.
- Attendance and enrollment records are subject to review and audit upon request. Students found to be enrolled for the same period of time in more than one class will require proof of enrollment and attendance. Payments will be retroactively adjusted for changes in student enrollment.
- No additional corrections, adjustments or payment processing will be made after May 15, 2010 or within five (5) business days after receipt of the final scheduled payment from Bright from the Start in accordance with the grant agreement (whichever occurs first).

18.7 Rosters

Roster data is critical and must be accurate for students and teachers. Roster information is subject to audit and must be substantiated by enrollment and attendance records for students and documentation of credentials for teachers. Inaccurate roster reporting will result in automatic probation.

Providers are required to submit documentation by mail to support and verify teacher credentials for all new teachers. This documentation is not required for returning teachers unless there has been a change in credential level. This information must be submitted when providers complete the first roster, and each time there is teacher change. Programs should use the *Teacher Notification* form (See Appendix O) to submit the verification documentation. Verification documentation includes: copy of official transcripts, copy of a state issued teaching certificate, copy of a U.S. Equivalency report for out-of-country credentials, or copy of degree with major clearly listed.

Documentation should be mailed to:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
ATTN: Teacher Credentials
10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30303

The first roster should include the names and information for children who attended Pre-K since the beginning of the school year. All changes up until the count date should be reflected on the first roster. **Children who have enrolled or registered for Pre-K but have not attended a scheduled Pre-K instruction day should not be reported on the first roster.** (Exception: If the class instruction begins after the first roster is due, the Pre-K provider will need to report “registered” students beginning as of the count date.)

Subsequent rosters should include any changes made to the previous roster. Dates must be accurate for beginning and ending points for children and teachers so that a reduction in payment does not occur. Inaccurate reporting will increase the probability that payments are reduced. Rosters and attendance rolls (kept in the classroom) must match.

Adjustments in roster data will be made for the current roster period only.

Duplicate children are children who appear on more than one roster for the same reporting period. Since only one provider can be paid for the child, the provider who presents evidence that the child was in attendance at the time shall receive payment while the other provider will have their payment reduced. To reduce the number of “duplicate children,” Bright from the Start recommends that providers contact the family of a child absent for three consecutive days to find out the reason for the absence. Contacting the parent can reduce the number of children kept on the attendance rolls of one program when they might be attending another program.

The Pre-K provider is responsible for replacing, as soon as possible, any child who leaves to prevent their payment from being reduced. Children who have been absent for 10 consecutive days without a reasonable excuse must be removed from the roster, but this does not mean that a child should be kept on the roster for 10 days after their last day of attendance.

Roster based payments shall not be made until the required roster information is submitted.

Roster	Count Day	Due to Bright from the Start
1 st	August 13, 2009	August 20, 2009
2 nd	September 10, 2009	September 17, 2009
3 rd	October 15, 2009	October 22, 2009
4 th	January 14, 2010	January 21, 2010
5 th	February 11, 2010	February 18, 2010
6 th	March 11, 2010	March 18, 2010

Failure to submit rosters by the due date will result in delayed payments. Rosters submitted after the due date may result in payments being processed by Bright from the Start after all other payments have been made. For example, if the first roster is received after August 20, 2009, the September payment will not be processed until the roster is received. If the second roster is received after September 17, the October payment will not be processed until possibly three weeks after the roster is received. If the third roster (or three rosters out of six) is not received on time, the Pre-K provider will be placed on the audit list for poor administrative capacity to operate Georgia's Pre-K Program. Providers usually receive their payments within three to five days after Bright from the Start processes the payment. Continued delays in submitting shall result in probation. (See Section 10.1)

19.0 Funding Information

19.1 Program Summary Chart

Based on the Fiscal Year 2010 budget approved by the Georgia General Assembly, the following rates will be in effect for the 2009-2010 school year:

Private Sector Rates Per Child

Lead Teacher Credential (See Section 12.3)	Zone One Annual Rate	Zone One Monthly Rate	Zone Two Annual Rate	Zone Two Monthly Rate
Certified	\$4,061.84	\$406.18	\$3,732.23	\$373.22
Four-Year College Degree	\$3,502.36	\$350.24	\$3,172.75	\$317.28
Two-Year College Degree /Montessori Degree	\$3,243.86	\$324.39	\$2,914.25	\$291.43

Note: Zone One includes these counties: Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Hall, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.

Public School Sector Rates Per Child

Lead Teacher Credential (See Section 12.3)	Annual Rate	Monthly Rate
Certified *	\$3,697.68	\$369.77
Four-Year College Degree	\$3,016.80	\$301.68
Two-Year College Degree (AA, AS, AAS, AAT) /Montessori Degree	\$2,758.30	\$275.83

* Plus applicable training and experience per the 2009 -2010 state teacher salary schedule.

Note: Funding rates reflect salary, benefits, and operating expenses for the core program. Additional funds are added for transportation services for Category One children.

Transportation services for Category One children **are not** mandatory. Transportation will be paid monthly based on submitted roster data at a rate of \$16.50 for each eligible child.

19.2 Local School System Salary Information

Local school systems will receive a training and experience factor (T&E) as a component of certified lead teacher salaries. RCs will **not** earn the teacher certification T&E factor.

For local school systems that pay the 10-month lead teacher, teacher assistant, and RC salaries over 12 months (i.e., July and August summer salaries for program services ending by June 30, 2010) salary/benefit expenses **must** be accrued using current Pre-K funds for these costs.

20.0 Audit and Accounting Requirements

20.1 Reconciliation Report

Private Pre-K providers shall provide Bright from the Start with a reconciliation report spanning the dates of the grant agreement. This report shall include supporting documentation, if requested by Bright from the Start, to verify that funds were spent in appropriate categories for their intended uses. Any unexpended funds must be returned to Bright from the Start when the report is submitted. Closeout procedures and forms regarding the 2009-2010 year-end reconciliation process will be forwarded to Pre-K providers during July 2010.

Funds paid by Bright from the Start for Pre-K services can be used to cover costs of the Pre-K program only and the Pre-K program's prorated share of other allowable expenses expensed through normal operation of the facility. Allowable expenses are those ordinary and necessary expenses directly benefiting or resulting from Pre-K program operations.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) provides authoritative guidance that must be followed for identifying the appropriate basis for allocating shared costs. The basis of allocating costs should be similar to the unit of measure for incurring the costs or consuming the expensed item. Examples include using a square footage basis for rent/mortgage expenses and utilities, and a per person or average daily attendance basis is appropriate for office supplies, management

staff, and transportation services if provided. Expenses must be allocated using the most logical basis for the costs incurred. For example, food costs would be allocated based on the number of children rather than square footage.

Expenses involving related parties must also be charged in accordance with GAAP. Related parties are one or more entities subject to the significant influence over the operating and financial policies of another entity. Providers involved in related party transactions with their centers should survey the surrounding business area and provide support that financial charges to the Pre-K program are within the range of same or similar arms-length transactions for their area. An example of related party transactions is when the owner of the facility is paid rent by the Pre-K program.

Note: Private providers must submit this reconciliation report by August 31, 2010 for the 2009-2010 school year. Local school systems must submit this reconciliation report by September 29, 2010 for the 2009-2010 school year. Providers should submit reconciliation reports electronically via PANDA (See Appendix P for the *Pre-K Year End Reconciliation Report*).

If a provider does not complete and submit the reconciliation report, Pre-K payments for the 2010-2011 school year will be held until the reconciliation report is received.

20.2 Private Nonprofit (PNP) Audits

PNP Pre-K providers must adhere to audit requirements as specified in O.C.G.A. § 50-20-1 et seq., Relations with Nonprofit Contractors.

Before Bright from the Start enters into a grant agreement with a nonprofit contractor, the contractor must furnish Bright from the Start with certified financial statements showing the nonprofit contractor's financial condition at the end of the previous fiscal year and revenues and expenditures for the previous fiscal year. When the nonprofit contractor has existed for less than a full year, the financial statements must cover year to date operations for the current year. The financial statements must include an individual list of each employee and his salary and reimbursable expenses; a list by category of the sources of income of the nonprofit contractor; and a list of the source(s) of all public funds received by the nonprofit contractor and the program for which the funds were received.

20.3 Right to Audit/ Agreed Upon Procedures Review

Bright from the Start reserves the right to require an independent, certified financial audit of the Pre-K program at the Pre-K provider's expense. Bright from the Start reserves the right to conduct Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) reviews.

Bright from the Start may conduct audits and AUP reviews as specified in the Georgia's Pre-K Program Grant Agreement for the 2009-2010 school year, Section III, Part C:

Grantee agrees to cooperate fully with Grantor auditors and/or agents providing Audit or Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) review services. Grantee will coordinate with auditors/reviewers to have appropriate staff available during the scheduled audit/review period. Grantee will make advanced preparations for scheduled audits/reviews to make available for auditors or reviewers all identified documents, records, and entity related materials requested by the auditors/reviewers for the current school year, as well as for prior school years in which Grantee participated in Georgia's Pre-K Program as requested by the Grantor. Grantee's failure to substantially prepare for a scheduled audit engagement or provide requested documentation or information to an auditor/reviewer during the scheduled audit period may result in the withholding of grant payments. The failure of Grantor to review and/or inspect the services provided or to discover a breach of this Grant or any amendment thereto shall not subsequently operate as a waiver of any remedies available to the Grantor.

If in the course of an audit there are negative audit findings, the provider will be scheduled for an audit for the subsequent school year.

20.4 Random Reviews

The Pre-K provider is subject to random, unannounced expenditure reviews by Bright from the Start or Bright from the Start contract auditors during the program year.

Note: All records (programmatic and financial) must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement

20.5 Multi-County Pre-K Provider Budgets

Multi-county Pre-K providers must maintain at least a minimum of one Pre-K program budget per county for Bright from the Start reporting needs.

20.6 Tracking of Pre-K Funds

The Pre-K provider must maintain financial records to track Pre-K expenditures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All records must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

Note: The Pre-K provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual/mid-year reconciliation statement. If a Pre-K program is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to Bright from the Start. Examples of such records include federal and state payroll records to verify payment of lead teacher and teacher assistant salaries, original receipts for equipment, supplies, and materials for Pre-K classrooms, and documentation of the Pre-K portion of operating expenses.

20.7 Fraudulent/ Inappropriate Use of Funds

The Pre-K provider shall ensure that expenses charged to the Pre-K funding source are not concurrently charged to another program funding source. Providers with the Child and Adult Care Food Program or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), who are placed on the seriously deficient list and terminated from the food program, shall also be terminated from the Pre-K program.

The Pre-K provider must ensure that no Pre-K funds are used to pay penalties associated with adverse actions imposed by licensing or governmental agencies. Pre-K funds should be identifiable as separate from federal funds (e.g., Head Start, CACFP).

Note: Misuse of funds may result in repayment of funds and denial of current and future participation in Georgia's Pre-K Program and/or in prosecution.

20.8 Expenditure Waivers

To support quality programming, a Pre-K provider may request a waiver of the requirement concerning expenditures for materials/supplies and minimum teacher salary.

A waiver for the \$1,200.00 material and supply requirement may be requested if all classrooms and the playground at the site are well equipped as evidenced by the scores on the PQA. To receive a waiver, the Project Director must contact their Pre-K consultant who will approve the waiver requests. If a waiver is granted, the unexpended material and supply funds may be used for teacher salary and benefits, field trips, or other instructional activities only. Funds cannot be applied to non-instructional items. The waiver is approved for one year only.

Providers must meet the minimum salary requirement for lead teachers as listed earlier in Section 11.3. In the case where a lead teacher is out of the classroom frequently during the year and the substitute for that teacher is paid at a lower rate, the unused funds for teacher salary can be applied to instructional items. Unused salary funds cannot be used for non-instructional items. The Project Director should contact the Pre-K consultant who will approve the waiver request. The waiver is approved for one year only.

21.0 Other Considerations

21.1 Inappropriate Lead Teacher

Non-documented or insufficient information on lead teacher credentials, beginning with the first roster, will result in automatic probation and may jeopardize current or future participation in the Pre-K program. (See Section 10.1)

21.2 Inappropriate Staff/Child Ratios

Non-documented or insufficient information on staff/child ratios will result in automatic probation and may jeopardize current or future participation in the Pre-K program. (See Section 10.1)

21.3 Ineligible Birthdates and Lack of Birth Documentation

Proof-of-age eligibility must be on file the day the child begins the Pre-K program. Failure to remove or correct ineligible Pre-K student birthdates by the first roster (See Section 18.7 for first roster due date) may result in the center/school being placed on probation with possible termination. Providers will not be paid for children listed with ineligible birthdates or for children without birth documentation. (See Section 10.1)

21.4 Request to Move a Pre-K Class

Georgia's Pre-K classes can be moved only to sites under the same ownership and only with approval from Bright from the Start. To request permission to move a class, the Pre-K provider must complete the *Request to Move a Pre-K Class* form (Appendix Q) and submit the form to their Pre-K consultant. Programs must receive written approval before moving a class. Moving a class without prior permission may result in probation and/or loss of funding.

21.5 Request for a Change of Ownership

When a center is sold prior to or after entering into a Georgia's Pre-K grant agreement, a change of ownership can be requested by the new owner. If approved, the new owner may continue delivery of Pre-K program services. It is understood that the new owner accepts the conditions of the Pre-K grant agreement for the current fiscal year.

Entities applying for a transfer of ownership must be eligible to receive Pre-K funds as specified in the *Pre-k Providers' Operating Guidelines*. Entities applying for a transfer of ownership will not be considered if documentation exists that indicates non-compliance with any other Bright from the State programs or state agencies. Entities requesting a transfer of ownership should not base business decisions on an assumption that Bright from that Start will automatically process and approved a transfer of ownership request. A request to transfer a Pre-K grant agreement does not guarantee continuance of Pre-K program services. A change of ownership packet can be obtained by contacting Bright from the Start.

21.6 Noncompliance

Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with program requirements (Pre-K, Child Care, Nutrition Services, Audit, or Quality Initiatives) will result in immediate probation and may result in termination of the Pre-K grant agreement during the program year. All grant agreements for future services will be held pending resolution of outstanding issues. (See Section 10.1)

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

22.0 Reporting Requirements

22.1 PANDA Participation

Pre-K providers are required to use the PANDA system to conduct Pre-K related activities (rosters, application, waiting lists, RC reports). Regular access to the internet and an e-mail address are required to use PANDA. Using PANDA allows providers to receive regular Pre-K payments as quickly as possible and reduces duplication of provider efforts related to child roster data.

22.2 2009-2010 School Year Critical Reporting Dates

Below are the critical reporting dates for submitting information to Bright from the Start.

August 2009 The Pre-K provider shall submit copies of all lead teacher credentials and/or certificates that cannot be verified electronically through the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and other requested information to Bright from the Start.	
08/13/09	Roster Count Date
08/20/09	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a completed class roster including name of lead teacher. Copies of new Pre-K lead teacher credentials must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC.
08/20/09	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete, on PANDA, waiting list information.
09/10/09	Roster Count Date
09/17/09	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a corrected roster with changes made for students and teachers if applicable. Copies of credentials for new teachers must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC.
09/17/09	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list information.
10/15/09	Roster Count Date
10/22/09	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a corrected roster with changes made for students and teachers if applicable. Copies of credentials for new teachers must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC.
10/22/09	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list information.
12/22/09	Resource Coordination Total Summary Report due
01/14/10	Roster Count Date
01/21/10	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a corrected roster with changes made for students and teachers if applicable. Copies of credentials for new teachers must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC.
01/21/10	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list information.
02/11/10	Roster Count Date
02/18/10	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a corrected roster with changes made for students and teachers if applicable. Copies of credentials for new teachers must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC.
02/18/10	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list information.

03/11/10	Roster Count Date
03/18/10	Roster Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to Bright from the Start a corrected roster with changes made for students and teachers if applicable. Copies of credentials for new teachers must be sent if they cannot be verified electronically through the PSC. Submission of the last roster #6 in March will be final class data to be used in calculation of the remaining two payments other than the elimination of duplicate students if applicable. No further changes will be allowed to the roster after the final roster is submitted. Bright from the Start staff reserve the right to edit roster data based on current, accurate documentation or program guideline requirements.
03/18/10	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list information.
04/15/10	Funding approval deadline – The deadline for approval of instructional technology and playground purchases by Pre-K consultant.
05/13/10	Last day to dispute any payment for the school year. Supporting documentation must be faxed to (404) 651-7428 or scanned to Panda.finance@dec.al.ga.gov. Submission of the last roster #6 in March will be final class data to be used in calculation of the remaining two payments other than the elimination of duplicate students if applicable. After May 13, 2010, all Pre-K payments will be final. Any disputed payments should be reported prior to May 13th with final resolution by May 31, 2010.
06/11/10	Final Resource Coordination Total Summary Report due (or last day of school)
08/31/10	Private provider 2009-2010 reconciliation reports are due.
09/30/10	Public school 2009-2010 reconciliation reports are due.

Note: Rosters must include staff date of hire along with date of enrollment and birthdates for children. Rosters must be completed to receive payments. Additional information will be required on enrolled children including gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and special education services. Pre-K providers are responsible for reviewing electronic payment advice information in PANDA and alerting Bright from the Start of any questionable discrepancy in the payment amount on or before May 13, 2010. Corrections and/or changes not recorded in a timely manner on submitted rosters could result in non-payment of the adjusted amount.

Bright from the Start **may** request surveys and other information during the program year. Pre-K providers should return any requested information according to the formats and time lines indicated by Bright from the Start.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

23.0 Community Involvement

23.1 Participation

The existence of local coordinating councils is optional for each county. Providers are encouraged to participate in local collaborative partnerships at the local or county level to better serve children and prevent duplication of services.

23.2 Activities

For counties where local collaborative partnerships exist, the following activities are suggested:

- Update and distribute lists of local community resources to all sites in the county
- Collaborate to provide services for children and families in need
- Develop procedures for referring children with special needs
- Identify providers willing to donate medical services
- Provide forums for parents to share ideas and concerns
- Provide forums for discussing and solving local concerns/problems of providers, teachers, and RC's
- Create and distribute a list of substitute teachers/teacher assistants who could be utilized by all providers
- Provide forums for sharing instructional practices
- Develop a process to share non-confidential wait list information
- Collaborate on recruiting children to ensure that all Pre-K slots are filled
- Provide forums for compiling and submitting suggestions to Bright from the Start

23.3 Policy Development

Local collaborative partnerships that want to establish policy guidelines for providers in their communities must obtain **prior approval** from Bright from the Start before beginning this effort.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION FOR NEW AND EXPANSION PROGRAMS

24.0 New and Expansion Program General Information

- All new and expansion Pre-K classes should be adequately equipped with materials and equipment before the program begins.
- All newly funded programs must submit materials and equipment requests for approval **before** purchasing items with Bright from the Start start-up funds. The Pre-K consultant assigned to the Pre-K program will assist in this process beginning with forwarding The *Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* to each new Pre-K provider. The *Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* can be found in Appendix M or on the Bright from the Start website.
- New/expansion classroom start-up funds **must** be spent for classroom equipment, materials, and supplies.
- The Pre-K provider must establish an Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) process for payments to be electronically deposited in his/her bank account. Appropriate forms and instructions are included in the application package.
- Start-up funds for materials and equipment for new/expansion classes will be deposited in the Pre-K provider's bank account by August 2009.

- Funds will automatically be deposited in the Pre-K provider's account in 10 monthly installments unless adjustments are necessary due to information received by Bright from the Start.
- Pre-K staff will monitor and evaluate program progress during random visits throughout the year (See Section 9.0).
- All Pre-K staff must attend training sponsored or approved by Bright from the Start.

RESOURCE COORDINATION GRANT SERVICES

25.0 **Resource Coordination**

25.1 **Participation**

Provision of Resource Coordination (RC) services is optional. The purpose of the RC grant is to provide children and their families with *voluntary* access to services that help enable the child to be ready for school. Pre-K providers who want to offer RC services must complete and submit a separate RC grant application online.

25.2 **Eligibility Requirements**

- Must have provided Pre-K services for one year
- Must have eight (8) Category One children enrolled in each site receiving services
- Must maintain a high quality instructional program (meets or exceeds PQA)
- Must submit rosters and total program summaries by deadlines
- Must be in compliance with all applicable divisions of Bright from the Start

25.3 **Resource Coordination Application Process**

The grant evaluation process is highly competitive and not all grants are funded. Reviewers outside Bright from the Start evaluate and score all grant applications. The applications are ranked and grants awarded based on the applications. If funded, the grant amount may not be for the amount requested. The grant application, licensing reports, and PQA scores will all be part of the application process. Currently funded programs will also be evaluated on past resource coordination services and on the RC Program Assessment. Grant applications will be available online from Bright from the Start during the open application period.

25.4 **Reports and Training**

To be in compliance and eligible for funding for the next school year, all reports and documentation must be submitted **on time** during the current school year. Reports include:

- RC Service Plan (must be submitted by 9/30/09)
- RC Summary Report
- Reconciliation Report
- Rosters

- Waiting Lists

Submitting reports is the responsibility of the Project Director, and a lack of compliance shall affect future funding. RC funds are awarded at the company or board of education level, and turning in reports late for one site shall impact overall funding.

Each RC must attend all appropriate Bright from the Start training.

25.5 Resource Coordinator Credentials

RCs must have a minimum of an associate degree or equivalent college credit in social work, early childhood education, special education, psychology, sociology or a related field. A bachelor degree, in any field of study, is an acceptable credential for an RC.

25.6 Resource Coordination Services

Services coordinated through the RC grant include, but are not limited to:

- Specific services provided to all children
- Assistance with identified health issues
- Resource and referral assistance to families
- Family informational seminars/workshops
- Parent education/volunteer program
- Transition activities
- Literacy activities for children and families
- Community collaboration activities

25.7 Resource Coordination Record-Keeping Requirements

The documentation listed below must be kept on-site for at least three years and available to the Pre-K consultant. Programs must:

- Maintain accurate records on-site for completing the *Resource Coordination Report: RC Summary Report*
- Document meetings and/or contact with Pre-K teachers to discuss relevant information concerning children and families
- Provide and document an orientation to Pre-K families within 20 working days of the beginning of the instructional program
- Document participation in the Kindergarten Readiness Initiative
- Retain records for a minimum of three years as specified in the contract, including documentation needed for the annual reconciliation
- Document participation in a community collaborative
- Document opportunities for parents to participate in their child's education

25.8 Resource Coordinator Notebook

Each RC must keep a notebook on-site and available for the Pre-K consultant to review. The RC notebook is the documentation that will be used to evaluate the RC services provided by the program. It should include parents' contact forms for each Category One child in the program as well as rosters and RC Summary Reports. Documentation of kindergarten readiness plans,

collaboration efforts, workshops, newsletters, and family literacy activities should be included. Notebooks should also include documentation of activities counted on the Total Program Summary Report.

25.9 Full-Time Resource Coordinator Hours/Caseload

Full-time RC's must work a minimum of 40 hours per week. Flexible RC schedules are necessary and are defined by the needs of the families being served. Full-time RCs should serve between 50 - 70 Category One families depending on the services required. Each site served by an RC must have at least eight (8) Category One children enrolled to be eligible for Resource Coordination services.

25.10 Duties

The RC staff shall:

- Implement the Strengthening Families program
- Assist in coordinating services for children and families through multiple partnerships with public and private agencies by linking family members to needed services in the community
- Provide opportunities for parents to enhance their knowledge of their child's development
- Conduct weekly meetings or have regular contact with Pre-K teachers to discuss relevant information concerning children and families
- Provide an orientation about RC services to Category One families
- Assist non-Category One families as requested
- Maintain lists of community resources

Examples of appropriate RC duties include, but are not limited to:

- Planning and implementing parent workshops
- Conducting written and oral surveys of parent needs
- Referring children for special needs evaluations
- Assisting parents in obtaining EEDs (Eye, Ear and Dental) or immunization certificates
- Referring parents for job skills training, job interviews
- Assisting parents in obtaining housing
- Observing children in the classroom upon teacher/director/principal referral
- Assisting parents in applying for DFCS extended day services
- Acting as a liaison between public school or private providers for children/parents
- Contacting parents about chronic tardiness or absenteeism and assisting them in complying with guidelines
- Maintaining documentation of RC activities, including services to children and families

RCs working as part of a Family Connection collaborative may participate as part of the Targeted Case Management team.

An RC shall not serve as lead teacher, teacher assistant, project director, principal, assistant principal, school counselor, child care center director or assistant director, bus driver, substitute teacher, bus monitor, receptionist, cook, janitor, field trip organizer, or in any other role that diverts attention from his or her primary role as a resource to families.

Note: Any requests for additional duties or roles for RCs must be outlined in the program's RC service plan and approved by the Bright from the Start RC Coordinator.